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**NEWS RELEASE**

# Judd Gregg



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **SENATOR GREGG CALLS ON SECRETARY OF DEFENSE TO EXPAND AND AGGRESSIVELY FUND MASS DESTRUCTION CIVIL SUPPORT TEAMS**

WASHINGTON -- U.S. Senator Judd Gregg (R-NH) recently joined several of his Senate colleagues in calling on Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to continue to expand and seek funding for an additional 23 Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Teams so that at least one team can be located in each state and territory. There are currently 32 full-time and 23 part-time WMD-CSTs across the country, including a site at the National Guard headquarters in Concord.

In a letter to Secretary Rumsfeld, the Senators stated, "As you know, the emerging chemical, biological, and other threats of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century present new challenges to our military and to local first responders. The WMD-CSTs play a vital role in assisting local first responders in investigating and combating these new threats.

"As Senators representing the 19 states that currently have part-time WMD-CSTs, we urge you to work to ensure that the necessary resources to establish, train, and equip the additional 23 teams that are required by this Act are made a part of the Administration's budget request for fiscal year 2004. We also ask that you ensure that sufficient funding and increases in National Guard end-strength are included to provide for the additional 506 full-time National Guard personnel that will be required to man these new teams. Given the important role that the men and women of the National Guard play in our ongoing missions at home and abroad, we should ensure that the establishment of these important teams does not put at risk full-time manning in other vital areas of the National Guard's mission."

New Hampshire National Guard Adjutant General, Major General John E. Blair, stated, "I am pleased to have Congressional support as co-signers of this important initiative. The establishment and resourcing of Weapons of Mass Destruction-Civil Support Teams in all states is vital in assisting first responders as they do battle against these potential threats."

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